



A Few Green Points

Point Reyes National Seashore Monthly Sustainability Newsletter

January 2012, Issue 6

Reduce, Reuse, REFILL!

**Inside the issue: -Recycling News
-New Biobased Labeling
-Federal Green Challenge**

Point Reyes National Seashore (PORE) recently installed Elkay EZH₂O™ water bottle filling stations at the Bear Valley Visitor Center and Headquarters Administration building. The filling stations provide a convenient rapid fill of chilled, filtered water to quench thirst and help minimize disposable plastic bottle waste into the environment. The filling stations feature a counter displaying the quantity of bottles saved from the landfill.



Photos (L-R): Maintenance worker Garth Ellis testing the new water bottle filling station at the Bear Valley Visitor Center (BVVC); an interpretive sign to educate staff and visitors on bottled water consumption; a counter displaying the current number of disposable plastic bottles diverted from the landfill since its late December 2011 installment at the BVVC.

More than 17 million barrels of oil, enough to fuel one million cars for a year, are needed to produce the plastic water bottles sold in the United States annually. Americans went through about 50 billion plastic water bottles in 2006. With the current recycling rate for plastic bottles at only 23%, more than \$1 billion worth of plastic is lost in the landfill.

The recommended eight glasses of water a day, at U.S. tap rates equals about \$0.49 per year, while that same amount of bottled water is about \$1,400. While being able to save money and energy, the Elkay EZH₂O™ water bottle

filling stations will look to inspire and educate staff and visitors on more environmentally friendly hydrating options.

Sources: Elkay Sales Inc., Washington Post, Fast Company Magazine, Banthebottle.com

A Plastic Entanglement

With plastic embedded in so many of our everyday products, it is easy to disregard the consequences of the wasteful plastics that end up in landfills or as litter on land, rivers, and in the ocean. A great percentage ends up employed for hundreds of years by the "Great Pacific Garbage Patch," a concentrated haven of plastic marine debris residing in the Pacific Ocean. Many birds and marine life migrating through this pollution vortex often cannot tell the difference between food and foam and then suffer a harsh reality. The northern elephant seal that was recently freed from a plastic packing strap entangled around its neck, was just one of probably many cases that are occurring today around the world and in our Seashore.

generated 31 billion tons of plastic waste in 2010, with only 8 percent recovered for recycling. Even with so many beach cleanups and recycling drives, the number of plastics in the ocean and washed ashore will only continue to rise unless we make more sustainable choices in our daily lives.

What you can do for starters:

1. Avoid single-use plastic products (e.g. grocery bags and water bottles)
2. Select reduced or eco-friendly packaging options when available.
3. Volunteer to clean up beaches, open spaces, neighborhoods, etc.
4. Spread the word about plastic pollution.
5. Recycle! Contact your local recycler or waste management company for recycling questions and needs.
6. Don't litter.



Top: Northern elephant seal freed from plastic packing strap. **Bottom:** the removed plastic packing strap. NPS Photos

For more information on the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, visit: www.marinedebris.noaa.gov/info/patch.html.

According to the U.S. EPA, Americans

Care Packaging



Styrofoam packaging is often referred by environmentalists as the bane of all mankind's existence. With so much shipped everyday and not enough recovery centers for reuse and recycling, most of the time they end up in a landfill where they will remain for thousands of years. Storing this stuff in your house or workplace for reuse can be an alternative, but with a seemingly endless supply and low rate of reuse, the picture can get messy. One alternative product that is looking to help curb the styrofoam waste stream is the biodegradable packaging peanut. Often resembling a "cheese puff," though not recommended for eating, these packing peanuts are typically made from 100% corn-starch, are non-toxic, durable, static free, and fully degradable in water or compost piles. The peanuts are usually white or green in color. If available, they can be requested from the mail-order companies prior to placing an order. Shippers will usually put a slip in with your shipment if they used biodegradable peanuts. Recommended disposal method: 1) REUSE again and again for your packaging needs, 2) Add to your compost pile, 3) Add to your plant pot and let it dissolve when watering.

Sources: ecopackagingpeanuts.com, starchtech.com



Examples of biodegradable peanuts (left) next to their Styrofoam counterparts.

Plastic Bag Recycling



"In the United States, an estimated 8.4 billion pounds of plastic bags, sacks, and wraps are consumed and disposed of yearly." (Source: CalRecycle)

According to CalRecycle, approximately 247 million pounds of plastic grocery and merchandise bags are disposed in California landfills annually and accumulating. In 2007, California mandated that plastic carryout bag recycling drop-off bins be made available at all regulated supermarkets and large retail stores with a pharmacy, through the At-Store Recycling Program. Through this program, consumers are able to recycle plastic bags and film at their local participating stores. In an effort to help combat this waste stream, PORE began a new recycling program to collect staff plastic bag, packaging film, and other items that would typically get disposed in the regular trash bin. Collection bins with interpretive signage have been placed in Administration, Natural Resources, Buildings and Utilities, and Roads and Trails. Accepted plastic items include: grocery bags, bread bags, wrapping material for big shipments, electronic wrap and any other clean, dry bags labeled #2 and #4. These materials are later recycled into composite or recycled plastic lumber and other construction materials or reprocessed into small pellets or post consumer resin which can be used manufacture a variety of products such as new bags, pallets, containers, crates, and pipe. Thanks to Wendy Poinot for spearheading this effort!

Sources: <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/Plastics/AtStore/default.htm>
<http://www.plasticbagrecycling.org/plasticbag/index.html>



Plastic Bag Recycling Program:

<u>Accepted items</u>	<u>Not accepted</u>
-newspaper bags	-frozen food bags
-dry cleaning bags	-biobased or
-bread bags	degradable bags
-produce bags	
-toilet paper, napkin, & paper towel wraps	
-furniture wraps	
-grocery bags	
-zip lock bags	
-cereal box liners	



America Recycles Day



America Recycles Day (ARD), celebrated every **November 15** is the only nationally recognized day dedicated to encouraging Americans to recycle and to buy recycled products. This year, Point Reyes and Conservation Corps North Bay teamed up to host an informational booth outside of the Bear Valley Visitor Center to educate visitors about recycling practices at the Seashore and what they can do at home to divert valuable resources from the landfill. In 2010, Point Reyes recycled 87 tons of material, an equivalent of keeping 60 cars out of the landfill! In 2011, the park reduced its waste to the landfill by 30 tons! Our overall rate for diverting waste from the landfill is improving but we still have a ways to go to achieve our goal of diverting 50% of our solid waste from the landfill by 2015. Please continue to pitch in and remember the three R's: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle!

Photos: (Top) Sara Hammond and Dale Dualan with Recycles Day sign. (Bottom) Recycling Day tabling booth outside the Visitor Center



Off the Mailing List

Advertising mail gets sent everyday in all sorts of ways, forms, and sizes. Many are simply thrown in the trash or recycled immediately. According to the U.S. EPA, about 4 million tons of "junk" mail is produced annually in the United States and over 50% ultimately gets sent to the landfill. By eliminating junk mail, you can help divert waste, reduce the amount of energy and resources used to produce and ship junk mail, and reduce the risk of losing important mail in your junk mail-filled pile. Canceling your junk mail usually requires a phone call or a fax of the recipient's info to the sender/vendor with a request for removal. Claire Card from Admin has created an "Off Mailing List" folder located in the Administration building mail room to collect unwanted mail for cancellation. *Note: Place vendor/sender information and recipient portion (e.g. the back of a catalog) in folder. Contact Dale Dualan x5942 for any questions.



For more information on how you can prevent or discontinue junk mail, visit:

http://www.epa.gov/ne/communities/stop_spam.html



Wrapper Brigade Update

The following items can now be added in the wrapper collection bin for recycling:

- writing instruments (pens, markers, highlighters, etc.)
- cheese packaging
- drink pouches



Wrapper collection bin locations:

- 1) Admin kitchen area
- 2) downstairs Admin mailroom hallway
- 3) B&U kitchen
- 4) Resource Management kitchen
- 5) Roads & Trails break room
- 6) Trails shop

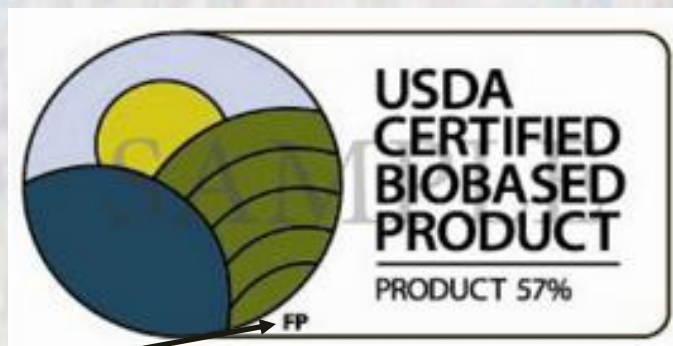
For info: Contact
Dale Dualan x5942



Biobased Products Get USDA Label

BioPreferred®, launched in February 2011, is a program that was created by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (2002 Farm Bill), and reinforced in Executive Order (E.O.) 13514 – *Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance*. The purpose of the program is to increase the purchase of biobased products in order to provide opportunities to boost domestic demand for renewable commodities and to create jobs and investment income. Managed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), BioPreferred® includes a preferred procurement program for Federal agencies and their contractors, and a voluntary labeling program for the broad scale consumer marketing of biobased products. With the new USDA Certified Biobased Product label (see below), consumers are able to take into account that a product contains a verified amount of renewable biological ingredients and that accuracy is assured by strict USDA monitoring and ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials) standard D6866 testing. Manufacturers and vendors seeking the use of the label must submit an application for each biobased product for which the company is seeking certification.

The legislative definition of a biobased product is any product composed in whole, or in significant part, of biological products, renewable agricultural materials (including plant, animal, and marine), or forestry materials. Currently USDA has established minimum biobased content standards for 64 product categories including food service, janitorial, landscaping, construction, and others. A product must meet or exceed the minimum biobased content of 25 percent and other certification criteria in order to use the Certified Biobased Product label.



FP

is the symbol for Federal Procurement Preference program, indicating products that are eligible for preferred Federal procurement. Under the program, Federal agencies and their contractors are required to give preferential consideration to these FP-labeled products when making purchases. Under E.O. 13514, Federal agencies are mandated to purchase biobased products.

For online training webinar on the BioPreferred® Program visit:

http://www.energyworkshops.org/BioPreferred_Awareness_to_Action/index.html

An online catalog of current USDA Certified Biobased Products can be found here:

<http://www.catalog.biopreferred.gov/bioPreferredCatalog/faces/jsp/catalogLanding.jsp>

Website: www.biopreferred.gov

Twitter: @BioPreferred

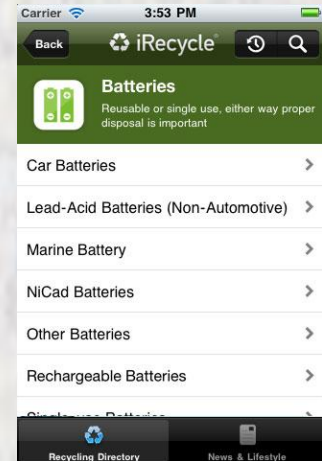
Up to the Challenge

Point Reyes is one of several National parks participating in the Federal Green Challenge national initiative created under the U.S. EPA's Sustainable Materials Program. The initiative challenges federal agencies throughout the country to lead by example and help reduce the federal government's environmental footprint in key areas that include waste, electronics, purchasing, energy, water, and transportation. This year Point Reyes is pledging to reduce its energy demand and waste tonnage to the landfill by 5% in both categories. We will need your full support to attain this goal! Updates on progress will be made in the upcoming months. Contact Sara Hammond at x5165 or Dale Dualan x5942 for any questions. For more information visit: www.epa.gov/fgc



Eco-friendly Applications

iRecycle is a green "app" (aka application software) developed by earth911.com and is available for iPad, iPhone and Android phones. iRecycle helps you locate recycling resources near you, providing access to numerous ways to recycle just about anything, plus the latest in green news and innovations. Using your current location, ZIP code, address or city, get access to nearby collection points for recycling, including directions, hours of operations, and materials accepted. For more info: visit earth911.com/irecycle



Upcoming Dates & Events

- February 2 - New Lighting Technologies Free Webinar (Federal Energy Management Program – FEMP First Thursday Seminar Series) (Online)
- March 20 – 9th Annual Water Conservation Showcase, hosted by U.S. Green Building Council-Northern California Chapter, EBMUD, PG&E (San Francisco, CA)
- April 22 – Earth Day



Monthly Challenge

Avoid purchasing disposable soda/water bottles for a month. (Or ever.)



Have any questions? Comments? Or a story or topic you'd like to suggest or contribute? Feel free to contact Dale Dualan at 415-464-5100 x5942 (email: DaleDualan@partner.nps.gov) or Sara Hammond at 415-464-5165 (email: Sara_Hammond@nps.gov)